

SOME NOTES ON COLLECTING MOLLUSCA IN OHIO DURING 1906.*

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The summer of 1906 was not favorable for collecting mollusca in rivers and creeks. The water was higher and more turbid than it usually is. The same has been reported from other states. Yet there was some good in this state of things; on the one hand, the mussels and snails had a favorable season for growth, and on the other, they were somewhat protected from the shell and pearl hunters.

A few, somewhat hurried, collecting trips were made to some parts of the state; the expenses of most of them were paid from the McMillin fund of the Ohio State Academy of Science. The results of these trips were somewhat below expectations, partly on account of the conditions of the water and weather; as for some of them the season was too much advanced. Yet, a few species were found which had not yet been listed for the state, and many localities were noted. The finding of a fossiliferous deposit in Defiance County was also of interest. Like the similar deposits in the Ohio and Miami Valleys it shows that there was a time when land snails especially were plentiful. Compared with this, our present molluscan fauna is very poor, especially in the northwestern part of the state.

On the whole stretch from the western parts of Stark and Summit counties to Defiance, there are few places where land snails can find "congenial surroundings," even approximately suitable conditions of life, in consequence of deforestation, drainage and culture of the soil. It is evident that not only the number of individuals is diminished to a small per cent of their numbers even of a few score years ago, but that many species are being exterminated over large tracts of land. And the same can be said, to a large extent, of fresh-water mollusca, gastropods as well as bivalves.

It is generally understood that limestone is favorable for the growth of snails; but at Tiffin, e. g., I was badly disappointed. A several hours' tramp left my boxes almost empty, and apparently favorable and promising places were found absolutely barren. But the rocky rapids of the Sandusky river yielded a few things which had not been looked for—although no Unionidae—and show that at favorable places of that river a rather rich harvest may still be expected.

The Licking River (or creek) at Newark is very poor; a few snails were found, but not a trace of a mussel. Yet there is no doubt that it had its fair share of them. Rather the same con-

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dition is coming on in the Great Miami river, where I was collecting a few years ago at and above e. g., Hamilton, also at Dayton. The very wide river bed is in striking contrast to the little shallow stream at low water. The few species of Unionidae still there, and few in numbers, are of large forms and show that the river must have offered very favorable conditions for their development. But very few young and half grown specimens were found; before very long, most or all of them will be gone; and the shell and pearl hunters are hastening their extermination.

A few words may be added with respect to Lake Erie. Unfortunately, I have had no chance yet to do systematic and thorough collecting in the lake itself with the dredge. But repeated collecting along the shore, at Sandusky and Vermilion showed that there is still a fair number of Unionidae. Pleuroceridae, etc. A strange contrast to this is seen, e. g., at Fairport, Lake County. All I was able to find there was a dead shell of *Lampsilis luteolus*, not a trace of anything else, in spite of all search east and west of the Grand River, along the lake. And that was a few days after one of the severest storms of the season. A man coming along the beach held a water-worn Pleurocera in his hand, as a rare find; and a fisherman who has lived there for the last thirty years told me that he knew of no place where I might find a mussel. Probably the same condition as that of mollusca is found with respect to other groups of animals. What is the cause of such utter barrenness? And how is it with other parts of the lake, further eastward?

It may be repeated that it is high time to take an inventory of our mollusca fauna, that some more systematic collecting be done in various parts of the state which are still as much as unexplored. Students of nature are urgently invited to pay their attention to these interesting animals. A pamphlet giving directions for collecting and preparing specimens will be published by the Carnegie Museum. Correspondence with anybody interested—or to be interested—in this line, is solicited.

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